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MINUTES

WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Monday, 7th September 2026**

Place: **Town Hall, 61 Newland Street, Witham, Essex**

Present: Councillors

P.	Heath	(Town Mayor)
L.	Barlow	
P.	Barlow	
B.	Fleet	
J.	Goodman	
L.	Headley	
J.	Martin	
R.	Ramage	
J.	Robertson	
E.	Williams	Arrived 7.32pm
H.	Andrews	(Deputy Town Clerk)
S.	Puckey	(Open Spaces Officer)

68. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R. Playle and B. Taylor. Councillors E Adelaja, J.C. Coleman, J.M. Coleman and A. Sloma were absent.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

69. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held 11th August 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

Councillor Williams entered the Chamber at 7.32pm

70. INTERESTS

Councillor Goodman declared a non-registrable interest in Minute 80 – S106 River Walk Paths as he knew the potential contractor. Later in the meeting, Councillor Ramage also declared a non-registrable interest in Minute 80 - S106 River Walk Paths as he also knew the potential contractor.

71. QUESTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

72. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

The Town Mayor advised that the District Council elections would now be held at the same time as the Town Council elections on 6th May 2027. Councillor Ramage added that a review of the new bin collections would be held at the end of the month. There was no update on the local Plan.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

73. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Details of the Town Mayor's engagements attended for period 3rd to 30th August 2026 were received.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

74. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Deputy Town Clerk reminded members of the upcoming Street Entertainment Festival being held on 19th September 2026. There will be a Witham Town Council gazebo again this year and more volunteer councillors would be needed to help on the stall.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

75. BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

The Mayor provided an update on the meeting held with Braintree District Council (BDC) on Friday 28th August:

It was reported that the District Council have appointed a new Asset Management Officer who will liaise with the Town Clerk about any potential business case for transferring assets to Witham in the future. To start the process, an Expression of Interest should be submitted through the Asset Transfer Policy.

Following the success of the Braintree District Council Housing Officer working from the Town Council Heritage Room but then stopping the service due to staff availability and working arrangements, Braintree District Council was asked to pledge to restart these sessions as soon as possible. Peabody Housing and the NHS are continuing their drop-in services regardless, of Braintree District Council's position.

The Town Council expressed their disappointment that the POSI document had not been approved in March 2026 as was normally the case. Although this was holding up the commissioning of new projects in Witham, the District Council stated that due to staff pressures it would not be approved

until November 2026. The Town Council requested to hold their own S106 funds, as the approval process was particularly slow, and the council were concerned this would be even harder with Local Government Reorganisation. The District Council stated this would not be possible as not all parish and town councils would be in a position to do so.

It was agreed that, subject to a written agreement, the District Council would send the £30,000 allocated to Witham Christmas Lights imminently.

The cleanliness of the toilets at Lockram Lane were discussed. The Town Council agreed to continue informing the District Council of any complaints it receives by email or in person through the Information Centre.

The Council expressed an interest in seeing the landscaping on some of Witham's roundabouts improved, in particular the one at the back of the Grove Centre. The District Council agreed to find out who is responsible for arranging sponsorship.

The Town Council requested support with planning enforcement on Newland Street and the District Council agreed to pass on details of an Officer who could support the Town Council's Planning Officer.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

76. REVIEW OF POLICIES

Members discussed the Meeting Attendance Policy and, on balance, felt it was suitably worded to cover exceptional circumstances. It was agreed to monitor and review it again next year, as suggested, to ensure it is working as planned.

RESOLVED That the Meeting Attendance Policy be agreed and approved.

77. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 S.1(2) and in accordance with Standing Order 3(d), the press and public should be excluded from the remainder of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

78. LAND TRANSFER

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

79. WITHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE

A verbal report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and that the council proceed with the completion of the transfer of the community centre and that the transfer contract be signed and sealed once presented by the Town Council's solicitors.

80. RIVER WALK PATHS

Councillor Goodman and Councillor Ramage had declared a non-registrable interest.

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and Foster Contracting be appointed for path resurfacing in the sum of £2,300 to be reimbursed using Section 106 funding.

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the Meeting at 8.15 p.m.

Councillor P. Heath
Town Mayor

HA/SP/8.09.2026